

From: John Mills
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2005 9:58 AM
To: Dabbs, Paul
Cc: Beutler, Lisa; Guivetchi, Kamyar
Subject: Highlights document comments...

All:

Thanks for the opportunity to look over the Highlights document. I would like to offer these observations and suggestions.

Generally, what I thought was lacking was a clearly stated narrative, or a good graphic depiction, that demonstrated to the reader how the various items mentioned in the plan (Scenarios, Foundational Actions, Initiatives, water management “issues”, Actions, water management activities, management strategies, near term actions, resource management strategies, Recommendations and portfolios. There are a lot of terms in the document that appear to be different than each other, but it is not clear just how different they are. In using terms the document should either should explain how they differ from the others, or where they really mean the same thing, be combined into common terms. I fear terminology may confuse people if it isn't consistent.

Perhaps you have someone you can use to develop a “picture” of sorts of the various elements of the plan: how they fit together functionally. I do not believe that the lay person reading this will understand the various “pieces” and terms in the present form. I recall some of the Calfed graphics Lester used in his old overhead projection. They worked well in graphically demonstrating how the program elements “fit” together to make a whole.

This document (Highlights) may be the only portion of the Bulletin 160-05 that many elected officials choose to - or have the time to - read. Therefore, it is critical that it be a) crystal clear in its meaning and b) easily understood with someone with little or no previous information on the 160-05 effort, or earlier Bulletin 160's.

A key element to understanding this document is that the words and terminology are clear and used consistently so as to “lead” the reader along and explain the form and function of the Plan. Bulletin 160-05 uses terms (example, “foundational action”) in ways that have significance to the Plan and how it functions, but may be overlooked by the reader. Additionally, the terminology in 160-05 should be explained in the Highlights document itself. Wherever possible similar terms - that perhaps the author(s) meant to mean the same thing - should be eliminated and the use of one term become the default.

Below is a list of things I believe need clarification for the reader to actually understand the Plan and a few last minute suggestions:

1. Initiatives -How is this something a legislator / administrator would use? Is this an initiative like one that will go on the ballot (remember the audience across the street!) or is it something different? What would a layman think it is and means?

2. Foundational Actions for Sustainability - what are these? They seem to be things many people would say we are doing already to some degree. Therefore, are foundational actions different than the status quo? Shouldn't we be saying (page 7 for example) that "Californian's must use water more efficiently"? Ditto on protecting water quality. A foundational action that is the status quo does not seem to be something to "build on" which is the image I have of a foundation (maybe this is because we are remodeling our house right now).

3. What are environmentally and economically "sound" transfers of water? CEQA does not presently require an analysis of economics in a transfer, so how will this change under 160-05 from the situation today? Is this a DWR policy and if so, it should make it clear that other transfers may not be subject to DWR standards.

4. The term "Water Portfolio" cries out for a simple graphic. I believe the reader will be confused by the term if it is not presented more clearly. Perhaps a graphic that demonstrates how the Portfolio is part of the larger, logical whole of the Plan.

5. I believe it would be helpful to have a real world example of a "Regional Partnership". Subject for a sidebar? This could also demonstrate in real world examples how a region has "...opportunities not available to individual water suppliers." (page 10/11) I fear the tangible advantages of these Regional Partnerships and regional planning efforts will be lost on too many readers.

6. Is a "near term action" the same as a "foundational action"? If not, clarify. If so, why not use the same term? (page 10)

7. The coordination with land management agencies touched on (page 11) could logically provide additional benefits such as; land use policy standards to protect water quality and watershed management efforts, ground water management coordination, a local water transfer clearinghouse of sorts, and better coordination of required 5 year Capital Improvements Plans. You may wish to add these in or at least point to them as specific potential benefits.

8. Page 13, what does “Reform State Government...” actually mean in the context of this Plan? Is this code for CPR or is it smaller/larger?

9. Page 14/15, There are five “blue box” items such as “Improve Water Quality” and “Practice Resource Stewardship” called out for the reader, but they aren’t explained in the context of the larger scheme. Are these strategies, actions, foundational actions, pieces of scenarios? We should explain what we are about to show the reader here and then show it to him. This doesn’t do that - or at least not for me.

10. Page 17. Note, in some rural areas the domestic and irrigation water ditch distribution systems were constructed during the Gold Rush of ‘49+. Therefore, some are closer to 150 years old than 100!

11. Page 18. Improved Flood Management is not linked to land use planning (existing law requires every General Plan to contain a Safety Element and integrating flood management into that element and the Conservation and Open Space elements is a logical action) but perhaps we should mention it here. This could also be referenced as a component of a IRMP.

12. Please do a global delete of the word “issue” and replace it with something a bit clearer such as; “problem”, “challenge” or the timeless “bugaboo” ; -)

Thanks for the opportunity to review and comment. Hope this is of some help given your schedule. Good luck.

Best,

John